



BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31ST, 1908.

WALTER C. GARMAN, M.D., Edin.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED

The Report of the Sanitary Inspector.

Printed by Order of the Town Council.

WEDNESBURY:

WEDNESBURY PRESS CO., PRINTERS, "LEADER" OFFICE.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30241972>



BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.

REPORT

OF THE

HEALTH OF WEDNESBURY,

FOR THE YEAR 1908,

BY

WALTER GARMAN, M.D., EDIN.,

Medical Officer of Health.

TO THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE
WEDNESBURY TOWN COUNCIL.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my Annual Report for the year 1908. In working out the statistics a population of 27,000 has been assumed. Taking the number of inhabited houses in the town, this figure is probably rather under than over the actual population.

1.—VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of births registered during 1908 was 894 (males 426, females 468), which is equal to a birth-rate of 33·1 per 1,000 of the population. The natural increase of population, by excess of births over deaths was 482.

The deaths from all causes numbered 412, in which are included four deaths which occurred in Public Institutions outside the town, and from which we obtain a death-rate of 15·2 per 1,000 of the population.

The deaths of children under five years of age numbered 179, or 43·4 per cent. of the total deaths. Of these 128 were under one year of age.

The following table furnishes an analysis of deaths under five years of age during the past five years :—

	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908
Premature Birth ...	20	17	18	21	18
Bronchitis and Pneumonia ...	36	35	36	53	31
Scarlatina ...	4	—	2	—	5
Measles ...	55	29	2	27	—
Whooping Cough ...	7	7	13	1	8
Diarrhœa ...	42	17	47	8	29
Diphtheria ...	15	3	3	7	4
Other Causes ...	103	91	72	75	84
	282	199	193	192	179
Percentage of total Deaths ...	56	48·8	44·1	43·4	43·4

The next table gives deaths due to zymotic disease. These numbered 60, and represent a death-rate of 2·2 per 1,000. For purpose of comparison the corresponding figures for the previous four years are included in this table :—

	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908
Erysipelas ...	—	—	1	4	1
Puerperal Fever... ..	—	—	1	1	1
Enteric Fever ...	8	8	3	4	1
Scarlet Fever ...	5	—	2	1	6
Measles ...	57	30	2	27	—
Diphtheria ...	19	7	3	7	4
Diarrhœa ...	44	17	50	10	31
Whooping Cough ...	7	8	14	1	8
Influenza... ..	7	8	10	7	8
	147	78	86	62	60
Death-rate per 1,000 ...	5·5	2·9	3·1	2·3	2·2

Following is a table giving the mortality from pulmonary disease for the past five years :—

Year.	Bronchitis and Pneumonia.	Phthisis.	Total.
1904	70	27	97
1905	75	29	104
1906	88	22	110
1907	102	25	127
1908	78	21	99

The next table is a statement of Vaccination performed during the year ending June 30th, 1908 : —

Births Registered.	Successfully Vaccinated.	Insusceptible.	Dead Unvaccinated.	Medical postponements.	Certificates sent in of conscientious objection.	Removals known.	Removals unknown	Unaccounted for.
938	625	10	78	8	195	6	16	—

The inquests held by the Coroner numbered 14, and may be thus classified :—

Natural Causes...	...	...	...	...	9
Accidents	...	...	...	...	4
Suicide ...	...	...	...	...	1
—					
Total ...	...	...	...	...	14

The next table sets forth the deaths occurring during 1908 from all causes, classified according to disease and ages for the four quarters, and of births for the same period :—

Mortality from all causes at subjoined ages															Mortality from subjoined causes ; distinguishing deaths of children under 5 years of age														
Births M	Deaths M	Deaths F	Registered Births	At all ages.						Scarlet Fever	Whooping Cough	Diphtheria	Enteric Fever	Diarrhoea	Enteritis	Phtisis	Cancer	Bronchitis and Pneu- monia	Alcoholism, cirrhosis of liver	Premature birth	Puerperal Fever	Heart disease	Accidents	Suicides	Influenza	Other causes			
				Under 1 year	1 and under 5 years	5 and under 15 years	15 and under 25 years	25 and under 65 years	65 years and upwards																				
109	105	58	52	214	110	25	11	1	1	46	26	...	Under 5 years...	...	1	1	1	7	1	6	1	2	22	2	1	4	29		
115	133	39	44	248	83	24	10	3	1	19	26	...	Under 5 years...	5 years and upwards ...	1	1	5	21	7	6	1	1	15	1	1	1	15		
110	124	39	48	234	87	40	13	0	1	19	14	...	Under 5 years...	5 years and upwards ...	1	3	3	11	8	3	3	1	121	1	1	1	121		
92	106	58	70	198	128	39	17	4	7	28	33	..	Under 5 years...	5 years and upwards ...	2	3	3	4	2	4	2	4	17	4	4	4	17		
426	468	194	214	894	408	128	51	8	10	112	99	...	5 years and upwards ...	...	1	1	8	11	1	1	9	1	330	1	1	1	330	
894	408	408	408	408	408	408	408	408	408	408	408	...	5 years and upwards ...	...	1	6	8	4	1	18	1	1	4	1	1	1	8173	

Following are the deaths of persons who belonged to Wednesbury, but who died in public institutions in other towns :—

Cause of Death.	Male.	Female.	Age. Years.
Otorrhœa, Meningitis	1	—	18
Perforated Appendix, Peritonitis	1	—	29
Gastric Ulcer, General Peritonitis	—	1	45
Accidental Burns... ..	—	1	2

URBAN DISTRICT OF WEDNESBURY.

Causes of, and ages at, death during 1908 :—

CAUSES OF DEATH.	All ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards
Small-pox							
Measles	6		5	1			
Scarlet Fever	8	5	3				
Whooping Cough... ..							
Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup)	4	1	3				
Croup							
Fever { Typhus	1			1			
{ Enteric							
{ Other continued	8						
Epidemic Influenza						5	3
Cholera							
Plague							
Diarrhoea	31	22	7			2	
Enteritis	8	4	4				
Puerperal Fever	1					1	
Erysipelas... ..	1						1
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	21			2	1	17	1
Other Tuberculosis Diseases ...	10	7	3				
Cancer, Malignant disease ...	22					13	9
Bronchitis... ..	51	12	9			11	19
Pneumonia	27	4	6	1	4	7	5
Pleurisy							
Other diseases of Respiratory Organs							
Alcoholism	1						
Cirrhosis of Liver }						1	
Venereal Diseases	7	7					
Premature Birth	18	18					
Diseases and Accidents of Par- turation... ..							
Heart Disease	22				2	12	8
Accidents	5		3			2	
Suicides	1					1	
Other Causes	159	48	9	3	4	42	53
All Causes	412	128	52	8	11	114	99

INFANTILE MORTALITY DURING THE YEAR 1908.

DEATHS FROM STATED CAUSES IN WEEKS AND MONTHS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE.

CAUSE OF DEATH.		Under 1 week.	1-2 Weeks	2-3 Weeks	3-4 Weeks	Ttl. under 1 Month.	1-2 Months.	2-3 Months	3-4 Months	4-5 Months	5-6 Months	6-7 Months	7-8 Months	8-9 Months	9-10 Months	10-11 Months	11-12 Months	Total deaths under 1 Year
ALL CAUSES. {	Certified ...	22	6	6	7	41	18	7	9	11	7	9	1	5	6	3	4	121
	Uncertified ...	3				3	2		1				1					7
Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup)												1						1
Whooping Cough...			1						1	1			1		1			5
Diarrhoea, all forms ...					2		3	2	2	4	3	1		2	2	1	1	22
Enteritis, Muco-Enteritis, Gastro-Enteritis					1		1				2				1			4
Gastritis, Gastro-intestinal Catarrh ...															1			2
Premature Birth ...		14	1	2				1										18
Congenital Defects ...		4	1	3							1							12
Want of Breast-milk — Starvation ...								1		1		1						3
Atrophy, Debility, Marasmus ...		6					2	1	3	2		2						16
Tuberculous Meningitis ...												1			1			2
Tuberculous Peritonitis:																		
Tabes Mesenterica													1	1			2	5
Syphilis ...							6			1		1						7
Rickets ...										1								1
Meningitis (not Tuberculous)											1							1
Convulsions ...							4		1									5
Bronchitis...							3	1	1	1		2		1	1	1	1	12
Pneumonia ...								1	1					1		1		4
Other causes ...		1	3	1	1		1		1									8
		25	6	6	7	44	20	7	10	11	7	9	2	5	6	3	4	128

Following is a table giving the birth-rate, death-rate, and Zymotic-rate for the past ten years :—

Year.	Estimated population.	No. of Births	No. of Deaths	Death-rate per 1,000 living.	Birth-rate per 1,000 living.	Zymotic death-rate
1899	26,000	900	480	18·4	34·6	3·7
1900	„	925	526	20·2	35·5	4·4
1901	26,544	876	387	14·5	33	2·4
1902	26,700	954	450	16·8	35·9	1·9
1903	„	900	437	16·3	33·7	2·7
1904	„	933	503	18·8	34·9	5·5
1905	„	871	407	15·2	32·6	2·9
1906	27,000	871	446	16·5	32·2	3·1
1907	„	910	442	16·5	33·7	2·3
1908	„	894	412	15·2	33·1	2·2

Following is a list of deaths occurring during the year in each street, the zymotic deaths being separately indicated :—

STREET.	Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic Deaths.
Alexandra Road ...	1	
Addison Street ...	4	1
Albert Street ...	7	2
Alma Street ...	2	1
Birmingham Street ...	3	
Brookside ...	1	
Bilston Road ...	4	
Brunswick Terrace ...	1	
Brunswick Park Road ...	3	1
Bright Street ...	2	
Brickkiln Street ...	4	
Bridge Street ...	14	2
Chapel Street ...	1	
Chapel Street, King's Hill ...	1	
Camphill Lane ...	2	
Camp Street ...	4	
Church Hill ...	7	
Church Street ...	5	1
Church Street, King's Hill ...	5	

STREET.				Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic Deaths.
Cobden Street	...	...	...	9	2
Cook Street	...	...	...	4	1
Cross Street	...	...	...	9	
Crankhall Lane	...	...	...	2	
Delves ...	...	...	...	1	
Dale Street	...	...	...	4	
Dangerfield Lane	...	...	...	4	1
Darlaston Road	...	...	...	8	1
Darlington Street	...	...	...	4	1
Dudley Street	...	...	...	14	3
Edward Street	..	...	...	2	1
Earps Lane	...	...	...	1	
Elwell Street	...	...	...	6	2
Fallings Heath	...	...	...	1	0
Foley Street	...	...	...	3	1
Foster Street	...	...	...	4	1
Franchise Street	...	...	...	7	1
Friar Street	...	...	...	2	
Great Western Street	...	...	...	5	
George Street	...	...	...	1	
Hall End	...	...	...	7	2
High Bullen	...	...	...	5	
High Street	...	...	...	2	
Hill Street	..	...	...	1	
Hydes Road	...	...	...	4	2
Hobbins Street	...	...	...	2	
Holyhead Road	...	...	...	16	3
Joynson Street	...	...	...	3	
King's Hill	...	...	...	17	5
King Street	...	...	...	7	1
Lloyd Street	...	...	...	3	1
Little Hill	...	...	...	2	
Ladbury's Lane	...	...	...	1	
Lea Brook	...	...	...	5	1
Market Place	...	...	...	2	
Mill Street	...	...	...	3	1
Meeting Street	...	...	...	10	3

STREET.					Deaths from all causes.	Zymotic Deaths.
Moor Street	...	...	...	...	1	
Moxley	...	...	...	...	10	2
North Street	...	...	...	...	1	
New Street	...	...	...	...	2	
Oakeswell Street	...	...	...	...	4	
Old Park Road	...	...	...	...	4	1
Old Union Street	...	...	...	...	7	1
Oxford Street	...	...	...	...	3	
Perry Street	...	...	...	...	2	
Piercy Street	...	...	...	...	6	2
Pritchard Street	...	...	...	...	2	1
Portway Road	...	...	...	...	8	1
Potters Lane	...	...	...	...	6	
Park Street	...	...	...	...	7	
Pound Road	...	...	...	...	1	
Queen Street	...	...	...	...	7	2
Russell Street	...	...	...	...	10	
Ridding Lane	...	...	...	...	2	
School Street	...	...	...	...	1	
Short Street	...	...	...	...	1	
St. James' Street	...	...	...	...	4	
Stafford Street	...	...	...	...	2	
Sparrows Forge Road	...	...	...	...	4	
Sampson Street	...	...	...	...	1	
Terrace Street	...	...	...	...	3	
Trouse Lane	...	...	...	...	9	2
Union Street	...	...	...	...	9	1
Vicarage...	...	...	...	...	11	2
Victoria Street	...	...	...	...	1	
Wellcroft Street	...	...	...	...	4	
Wood Street	...	...	...	...	2	1
Walsall Road	...	...	...	...	4	
Walsall Road, King's Hill	...	...	...	...	3	
Wood Green	...	...	...	...	12	2
Windmill Street	...	...	...	...	2	
Wharfedale Street...	...	...	...	...	1	

The following is a table giving the cases of zymotic disease notified to the Health Authority under the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act, with the deaths resulting from each disease :—

CAUSE OF DEATH.						Cases Notified.	Deaths.
Small Pox	...	...	...	...	...	0	0
Scarlet Fever	..	...	...	...	...	173	6
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	29	4
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	31	1
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	...	...	34	1
Puerperal Fever	...	...	...	...	...	3	1
Membraneous Croup	...	..	...	...	...	0	0
Total	...	...	...	...	...	270	13

From the foregoing figures the Council will be able to form some opinion as to the health of the town during the past year.

An examination of the figures for the past ten years shews that the average general death-rate for the period was 16·8 per 1,000; while the zymotic rate was 3·1, and the birth-rate 34·2.

During 1908 these three rates were respectively 15·2, 2·2, and 33·1—figures which, as regards the death-rates, shew the past year to have been better than the average. So far as regards the deaths from zymotic disease, it should be borne in mind that excluding the deaths from influenza and diarrhoea, these would only number 21 instead of 60: and the zymotic death-rate, instead of 2·2 per 1,000, would only be ·77 per 1,000.

Taking the diseases of the zymotic group, it will be seen that no case of small-pox was notified during the year.

Vaccination.—The record of vaccination performed during the year calls for careful examination. Of 860 children alive at the end of June, 1908, and born during the previous twelve months, 625 were successfully vaccinated—or 72·6 per cent.

Included in the balance of unvaccinated cases—235 in number—were 195 exemptions on account of conscientious objection. This number is equal to 22·6 per cent of the children who were due for vaccination. In this connection it is instructive to examine the rates

since the Amended Vaccination Act came into operation on January 1st, 1899. The following are the figures :—

Year.	No. of Living Children	Percentage of Successful Vaccinations.	No. of Exemptions.	Percentage of Exemptions.
1899	734	63·3	123	16·7
1900	816	61·6	67	8·2
1901	866	58·9	51	5·9
1902	804	84·7	41	5·9
1903	839	88·5	40	4·7
1904	810	89·2	38	4·6
1905	837	89·2	41	4·8
1906	794	87·5	68	8·5
1907	769	87·9	53	6·8
1908	860	72·6	195	22·6

The figures for 1908 call for explanation, being misleading as they stand, and suggesting a less unfavourable position than was actually the case. Seeing that the returns are made from July 1st, 1907, to June 30th, 1908, only the figures for the first part of last year are available in determining the effect exercised by the latest legislation upon the amount of vaccination performed, and so the full extent of the falling off in the number of vaccinations does not appear. Moreover, although the new regulations respecting exemption orders only came into force on January 1st, 1908, the children born within the last four months of 1907 came within the scope. I find from enquiries made that, as a matter of fact, most of the total exemptions were declarations made under the new Act.

The position revealed by these figures is in my judgment a serious one. When ten years ago Parliament decided upon a policy of enforced vaccination, this special and reliable safeguard against small-pox had almost fallen into disuse. Boards of Guardians, who frequently contained ardent Anti-Vaccinators, had ceased to prosecute defaulters, and Vaccination Officers, unsupported by their employers were unable to pursue their duties with any show of authority. All this however, was greatly altered by the Amended Act of 1898—and immediately the results obtained were immensely improved. This, so far as Wednesbury is concerned, is well shown by the figures supplied.

My Annual Health Report for 1898 states that the operation of vaccination had almost become obsolete. Whereas it will be seen that in 1899, no less than 63·3 per cent of the children who were due to be vaccinated, had successfully undergone the operation. The proportion of exemptions—16·7 per cent was somewhat high, and little was done in the first instance to enforce the Act. Gradually however the full powers given by the Act were employed by an energetic Vaccination Officer. The result was that the percentage of successful vaccinations performed gradually rose, until in 1904 and 1905 it amounted to 89·2, and that of exemptions fell to 4·6. Curiously enough however this progress did not satisfy the Authorities who conceived the idea that the Act was an oppressive measure. Continuity of so highly successful a policy was abandoned, and the existing Act was modified in such a manner as to enable any objector to obtain an exemption without trouble or expense. The immediate effect of this uncalled for step, a step wholly retrograde in character from the health standpoint, is seen in the figures under review. Instead of 87·9 per cent of successful vaccinations, as in 1907—with 6·8 per cent of exemptions, we have in 1908 rates respectively of 72·6 and 22·6—and the probability is that my next report will contain figures of a still more unfavourable character. The steady administration of the Act as it stood would very soon have rendered the country safe from small-pox—*i.e.* as safe as is possible without providing for the equally necessary re-vaccination. On the other hand the retrograde policy of the past twelve months will, if persisted in, leave the country in a state of very imperfect protection, and in the near future we shall have to deal with fresh outbreaks of smallpox, together with all the expense and danger which such outbreaks involve,

Scarlet Fever.—Of this disease 173 cases were notified, as compared with 120 cases in 1907, and 78 cases in 1906, and the affection appears to be quite endemic. The increased incidence of this disease has also been associated with a greater virulence, six deaths having resulted. This state of things is by no means satisfactory, although I should be surprised to find that we are in a worse case than our neighbours, who practice partial isolation—partial in the sense that having filled their Hospitals, they allow the surplus cases from time to time to remain without isolation.

Diphtheria.—29 cases were notified of which four were fatal. In 1907 there were 33 cases with seven deaths, and in 1906, 47 cases with three deaths. I must not omit to place on record that the Council agreed to supply Anti-diphtheritic Serum gratuitously in needy cases. So far the privilege has not been utilised.

Enteric Fever.—Nothing could better exemplify the greatly varying virulence of the poison of the specific fevers in different outbreaks than the operation of Enteric fever in Wednesbury during the past two years. In 1907 there were 13 cases with four deaths, whilst last year 34 cases were notified with only one death. Although many of the cases were of protracted character, complications were in the main absent.

The 34 cases may really be divided into two groups—in the first of which one would place the sporadic cases numbering 9—and in the second the remaining 25 cases which were in the nature of a localised epidemic.

The First Group was thus composed :—

Stafford Street, 2 cases.
Addison Street, 2 cases.
King Street, 3 cases.
Upper High Street, 1 case.
Elwell Street, 1 case.—Total 9 cases.

The Second Group contained 25 cases made up as follows :—

22, Foster Street, 1 case.
20, Trows Buildings, Portway Road, 3 cases.
45, Portway Road, 9 cases.
32, Portway Road, 1 case.
34, Portway Road, 3 cases.
65, Portway Road, 1 case.
78, Portway Road, 1 case.
Back 45, Foster Street, 6 cases.—Total 25.

It became quite clear as the progress of the disease was watched that the extension in the Portway Road area was mainly due to case-to-case infection. Several of the affected families were related, and in other instances the inmates of infected houses were on terms of intimacy. Moreover typhoid patients in an early stage of the disease and not

under medical treatment used the common privies, and so doubtless conveyed the poison to their neighbours. It is both interesting and instructive to observe the dates when the cases were notified. They were as follows :—

GROUP I. (9 sporadic cases).

Locality.	Date of Notification.
Elwell Street.	April 4th.
Upper High Street.	June 24th.
63, Stafford Street.	July 27th.
63, Stafford Street.	Aug. 17th.
Railway Terrace, Addison Street,	Aug. 24th.
47, Addison Street.	Nov. 11th.
28, King Street.	Nov. 24th.
38, King Street.	Nov. 29th.
38, King Street.	Nov. 29th.

GROUP II. (25 cases in a localised epidemic).

Locality.	Date of Notification.
22, Foster Street.	June 15th.
45, Portway Road.	July 13th.
45, Portway Road.	„
78, Portway Road.	July 16th.
45, Portway Road.	Aug. 24th.
45, Portway Road.	Aug. 27th.
45, Portway Road.	Sep. 23rd.
45, Portway Road.	Oct. 14th.
45, Portway Road.	Oct. 21st.
Back 45, Foster Street.	Nov. 2nd.
Back 45, Foster Street.	Nov. 4th.
34, Portway Road.	Nov. 8th.
34, Portway Road.	„
20, Trows Blds, Portway Road.	Nov. 8th.
20, Trows Blds, Portway Road.	Nov. 8th.
Back 45, Foster Street.	Nov. 11th.
45, Portway Road.	Nov. 15th.
Back 45, Foster Street.	Nov. 15th.
20, Trows Blds, Portway Road.	Nov. 16th.
Back 45, Foster Street.	Nov. 22nd.
45, Portway Road.	Nov. 23rd.

Locality.	Date of Notification.
65, Portway Road.	Dec. 2nd.
32, Portway Road.	Dec. 11th.
34, Portway Road.	Dec. 16th.
Back 45, Foster Street.	Dec. 22nd.

It will be observed that no case of enteric fever occurred during the first three months of the year; also that the outbreak in the Portway Road area assumed a distinctly epidemic character. The matter engaged the attention of the Council, and acting upon my advice, the Isolation Hospital was opened for the reception of cases.

The first case was admitted on November 19th, and seven cases of eleven subsequent notifications were isolated, and an eighth case was removed by the Poor Law Authority to the West Bromwich Union. Shortly afterwards the epidemic tendency subsided, and during the first month of the new year no case of Enteric Fever was notified. The nursing of such cases as were treated in their own homes was performed by the nurses from the Nursing Institute, and I cannot speak too highly of the thoroughness and efficiency of their work. The excreta of the affected persons were daily removed in typhoid pails by an official from the Sanitary Department. Even then however, it is practically impossible in many instances to check the spread of the disease; inasmuch as the privies used by the patients before they come under treatment are rendered centres of infection, highly charged with the typhoid poison—and also in many cases the very cramped nature of the accommodation makes it impracticable to isolate the patients in a degree which would ensure the safety of the other inmates of the affected houses. This being so, I feel it my duty to strongly urge the advisability of isolating cases of Enteric fever where the house accommodation is insufficient. Two other factors must be mentioned as favouring, in such localities as those referred to, the spread of the disease. Firstly, the ^{un}~~un~~paved Yards and Courts, such as are met with in Foster Street and Portway Road, combined with, secondly, the lack of cleanliness on the part of the inhabitants. One of our greatest difficulties was that in many instances unpaved yards were fouled by deposits of faecal matter—and these in some cases were made by children suffering from Enteric Fever. Under these circumstances the epidemic character assumed by the disease is easily explained. It will be readily understood how much less formidable such a state of things would be,

if the yard surface were paved with a hard and impervious material which would favour the removal, by rain, or ordinary flushing of such noxious deposits.

Puerperal Fever.—Of this condition three cases were notified during the year, of which one proved fatal. This is a satisfactory record, especially when one remembers the very large proportion of the total confinements which are attended solely by midwives.

Measles.—Very few cases of the disease arose, so far as I am aware, nor did any case prove fatal.

Zymotic Enteritis.—Thirty-one deaths resulted from this disease, of which 28 were under, and 3 over five years of age. Of these two only occurred during the first six months, nineteen in the third quarter, and ten in the fourth quarter. No features were associated with the cases which call for special mention.

Mumps.—The very extensive epidemic of this disease, which came into existence towards the end of 1907, persisted throughout the early months of 1908, and so seriously affected the attendance of scholars that school closure became necessary. St. James' Church School and the Wesleyan School on the Holyhead Road had already been closed, but between the middle of January and the first week in March each of the following Schools was closed for four weeks, viz.:—St. John's, St. Mary's, Mesty Croft, St. Bartholomew's, and Lower High Street. The outbreak speedily subsided without the occurrence of any fatal case, and by the middle of March was practically at an end. The experience, however, was a very exceptional one.

A considerable amount of general sanitary work has been carried out during the year. Full details will be found in the report of your Sanitary Inspector.

Two matters it is to be hoped will be dealt with in the course of the present year. Firstly, the Isolation Hospital needs attention in consequence of its partial subsidence, resulting from mining operations in the immediate neighbourhood. Naturally, however, we must be guided here by the advice of the Mining Engineer who has the matter in hand, and who will duly report as to the time when the repairs can be safely carried out. Secondly, we have still before us the question of the unpaved yards and courts. This question is now ripe for treatment,

and will, as I understand, be practically taken in hand when the Local Government Board sanction the application now being made by the Council for leave to adopt such portions of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act (1907) as bears upon this subject.

Speaking generally I think that a general survey of the figures presented to your notice will lead the Council to form a favourable opinion of the general health of the town.

I am,

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

WALTER GARMAN,

Medical Officer of Health.

Sanitary Inspector's Report.

SANITARY DEPARTMENT—BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY

TO THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE WEDNESBURY
TOWN COUNCIL.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my second Annual Report as Sanitary Inspector for the Borough of Wednesbury. The statistics show the work done in the Sanitary Department during the past year, and also particulars of nuisances and sanitary improvements effected.

GENERAL SANITARY WORK.

INSPECTIONS.

In addition to the investigation of complaints respecting overcrowding and existence of insanitary conditions in dwelling houses, there have been numerous investigations of properties in all parts of the town, and owing to such visits a large number of remediable defects were discovered and dealt with. The total number of inspections being 1129.

NOTICES SERVED.

In addition to special reports and letters forwarded to owners and occupiers respecting sanitary defects, 269 preliminary notices were served, particulars of which are set out in Table II.

The premises in respect of which notices were served were subsequently re-visited. In most cases these preliminary notices were sufficient to bring about abatement of nuisances.

Seventy-six Statutory Notices were served on your instructions. In many cases owners have voluntarily carried out sanitary improvements when the necessity of such improvements have been explained.

FILTHY AND DILAPIDATED HOUSES.

Thirty-six houses have been cleansed, limewashed, or re-papered, the internal brickwork, plastering, and woodwork receiving attention in 33 cases. Many of the houses contain the old brick sinks, which are more or less always defective, and it is pleasing to note that these are gradually being replaced with earthenware sinks. A large number of houses are entirely devoid of pantry accommodation, and in others there are unsatisfactory arrangements for the storage of food.

SURFACE PAVING.

The surface paving in seven yards has been extended, re-laid, or repaired. With a gradual displacement of the old system of surface channels greater progress should be made in future years. Hitherto it has not been desirable to press for the paving of yards where drainage operations were contemplated. It is proposed to deal with these yards under the Public Health Act, 1907, which will be adopted this year.

DRAINAGE.

Twelve houses previously without drainage have been connected to the sewer.

Eight drains have been relaid or repaired and 20 gully traps have been fixed on foul untrapped drains. Thirty-five choked drains have been opened and cleansed after written notices, and in addition a large number of entry gullies which were temporarily obstructed have been opened by the occupiers after verbal notice. The entry gullies are a continual source of annoyance and danger to health, they are repeatedly becoming obstructed, and sewage flowing across the footpath and down the street channels. All drains wherever possible should be carried to the rear of the property.

PRIVY AND WATER CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The dilapidated, foul, wet and offensive privies and ashpits, have received considerable attention. In some instances temporary measures were resorted to but the futility of such procedure is becoming more recognised, our experience going to show that where considerable amounts have been expended in endeavouring to render ashpits watertight, the

result aimed at is seldom achieved for more than a limited period. Even where surface percolations have been temporarily remedied, the concealed but really more dangerous type of leakage, viz, that into the subsoil goes on unchecked. In view of the well-known relation between zymotic disease and a polluted subsoil, the continuence of such leaking structures is of course a matter of serious moment. During the past year 241 privies have been replaced by 223 water closets, all of which were provided with suitable flushing cisterns. Each property was dealt with individually.

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS.

In ten cases legal proceedings were authorised by you ; but it was only necessary to take out a summons in one case, particulars of which will be found in Table IV.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

Four notices were served in respect of eight houses, which were unfit for human habitation. One house was made fit for habitation, and extensive alterations and repairs, and thorough cleansing are being carried out in six houses.

INSPECTION OF SLAUGHTER HOUSES AND FOOD SUPPLIES.

The slaughter-houses have been periodically visited. Four seizures of unsound food were made, and Magistrates orders for destruction obtained. In several instances the vendors have voluntarily destroyed food when their attention has been called to its condition. There are now 16 slaughter-houses on the register, of which 5 are subject to annual licenses. Periodical visits have been paid to the butchers, fish, game, poultry, and greengrocers shops, and the food exposed for sale was with few exceptions found to be of fair quality.

INSPECTION OF COWSHEDS AND DAIRIES.

A special survey of the cowsheds has been made, and as the result notices were served where requisite on the respective occupiers requiring the provision of sufficient lighting, ventilation, paving, and drainage in connection with the cowsheds. These notices have for the most part been complied with, and some extensive permanent improvements have been carried out. Three cowsheds were entirely re-built. Every possible effort has been made to see that the regulations are adhered to

in all respects. It is to be regretted that in several instances the occupiers will persist in depositing masses of manure in the open space immediately adjoining the sheds. Little attention is bestowed upon the grooming of the cows, especially the hind quarters, flanks, and udders, which were found foul with excremental matter.

Eleven applications have been made for premises to be registered as milkshops, of which 9 were granted. There are now 17 cowsheds and 64 milkshops on the register.

Speaking generally the milk is stored under better conditions than at one time prevailed. The storing or exposing milk for sale in general shops in proximity to articles likely to produce souring of the milk or to encourage dispersal of dust should be prohibited.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The cases of infectious disease notified were immediately visited. Seven patients affected with typhoid fever were removed to the Isolation Hospital. The cases were visited from time to time, printed and verbal instructions were given as to proper isolation of the patients and preventing the spread of the disease. Ninety-four rooms were disinfected after cases of infectious disease.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACTS.

At present there are 133 workshops including 28 bakehouses on the register. The following are a list of trades carried on in the workshops :—

Bakers	28	Laundry	1
Boots and Shoes...	8	Millinery	8
Breezes	3	Maltsters	1
Blacksmiths & Coachsmiths	13	Mason	1
Brushmaker	1	Marine Store Dealer	1
Carpenters and Joiners...	6	Nut Makers	4
Cabinet Maker	1	Organ Builder	1
Clothiers and Tailors ...	11	Printers	2
Cycles	2	Packing Case Maker	1
Cooper	1	Plumbers	2
Dressmakers	13	Saddlery	3
Files	5	Stamper and Socket Filers...	2

Grease and Oil ...	...	1	Stocking Knitting ...	...	1
Galvanizing ...	...	2	Surgical Dressing ...	...	1
Gun Locks ...	...	8	Sugar Boiler ...	...	1

Factories.—During the year six notices have been received from His Majesty's Inspector of Factories. In all cases the necessary work has been carried out.

Workshops.—These have been visited periodically to ascertain if the regulations respecting cleanliness and ventilation were carried out.

Homework.—When lists have been received containing the name and addresses of homeworkers, the premises were inspected and found in order.

Bakehouses.—These have been visited from time to time and were found in fair order.

The following table gives particulars of nuisances occurring in factories and workshops, and the sanitary improvements effected :—

Nuisance.	Sanitary Improvements effected.
Defective and insufficient closet accommodation.	Two water closets and urinals provided.
Want of Sanitary convenience.	Pail closet provided.
Three dirty bakehouses	Cleansed and limewashed.
Two dirty workshops	Cleansed and limewashed.
Insufficient ventilation to work-rooms	Additional ventilation provided in two cases.
Insufficient and offensive closet accommodation	Four water closets and urinal provided.
Foul and offensive closet accommodation	Water closet provided.

INSPECTION OF CANAL BOATS.

During the year ten boats have been inspected, every effort seems to have been made to conform to the Acts, both in regard to not exceeding the number of persons allowed by the certificate, to dwell therein, and in the cleanliness and general conditions of the cabins which presented a fair appearance of neatness and comfort.

In one case the number on the stern of the boat did not correspond to that on the certificate and on the owner being notified the omission was remedied.

MARKETS.

The markets have been held regularly and inspected during market hours. Two seizures of unsound food have been made. In the first case a fine of £1 and costs was inflicted, and in the second the vendor subscribed 10/- to the Nurses Institute, and gave an undertaking not to expose any unsound or decomposing fruit for sale in the future.

It is extremely difficult to thoroughly supervise the sale of butcher's meat, as one rarely sees the organs of the slaughtered animals, and the meat is generally cut up before it is brought into the market.

CLEANSING AND THE REMOVAL OF NIGHTSOIL AND HOUSE REFUSE.

The work of the removal of nightsoil from privies, and dry refuse from ashpits, and the weekly removal of the contents of dustbins, has been executed by the contractor, 3002 applications for the emptying of privies and ashpits were received, and 4954 privies, cisterns, or ashpits, and 7749 dustbins were emptied and cleansed.

The evils connected with privies and ashpits are now universally admitted by Sanitary Authorities, even the so-called dry ashpit becomes the receptacle for rags, fish heads and other offensive material. They serve as a breeding ground for rats, mice, insects, and especially house flies. I know of no measure more likely to improve the health of the Borough than the abolition of these structures. The Sanitary Committee recommends that in all new houses and where privies are converted into water closets, portable dustbins should be substituted for the fixed receptacle. All Dustbins should comply with the following conditions—Be of stout galvanised iron, cylindrical in shape, and fitted with Conical Covers, size 30 inches by 18 inches.

Where ashpits are in existence, the following works should be carried out—Take down front walls and extend yard divisional walls where necessary, and fill up and raise the bottoms of Ashpits to the level of the ground adjoining, and concrete and pave same with hard durable and impervious paving.

Where ashpits have been abolished and Bins provided, it is advisable that immediate intimation should be given, so that they may be placed on the list for attention.

There are now 334 Dustbins on the list, an increase of 274 during the year.

I am,

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

HERBERT TOPPING, Assoc. Royal San. Inst.,
Sanitary Inspector.

TABLE I.

Miscellaneous Inspections	1129
Houses concerning which complaints have been made ...	113
Re-inspections	735
Visits to Slaughter-houses... ..	341
„ Shops, Butchers	292
„ „ Fish, game, and poultry	147
„ Dairies, cowsheds, and milkshops	150
„ Common lodging houses	62
Canal boats inspected	10
Cases of infectious disease visited and reported upon ...	240
No. of infected patients removed to Hospital	7
<hr/>	
Total number of visits and inspections made ...	3226
<hr/>	
Number of preliminary notices served	269
„ statutory notices served	76
„ legal proceedings taken	1
„ letters written to owners <i>re</i> nuisances ...	306
Notices served under Housing of Working Classes Acts, 1890	4
Notices served under Canal Boats Acts	1
Reports sent to Surveyor <i>re</i> dangerous buildings, etc. ...	3
„ Water Co. <i>re</i> waste of water	2
Number of rooms disinfected	94
Houses from which bedding was destroyed and new bedding provided	2
Number of ashpits reported for emptying	3002
„ privies, cisterns and ashpits emptied ...	4954
„ dust bins emptied	7749
„ limewash brushes lent	264
„ bags and bottles of disinfectant given away...	1141

TABLE II.
PRELIMINARY NOTICES SERVED AND NUMBER
OF HOUSES IN CONNECTION WITH NOTICES.

				Notices served.	Houses in connection with Notices.
Filthy and dilapidated houses	...	...	...	19	64
Filthy and dilapidated outbuildings	...	...	...	9	24
Defective paving and surface channels	...	...	...	3	9
Defective eaves and downspouting	...	...	...	5	11
Insufficient drainage	...	...	...	13	21
Foul untrapped or defective drainage	...	...	...	3	21
Choked drainage...	...	...	...	44	145
Choked water closets	...	...	...	32	50
Insufficient privy accommodation	...	...	...	2	2
Insufficient ashpit accommodation	...	...	...	7	32
Foul, wet, open, and dilapidated privy-middens				57	252
Defective water-closet connections	...	...	...	3	5
Fouling of sanitary conveniences used in common	...	...	...	14	14
Overcrowded houses or rooms	...	...	...	11	11
Animals improperly kept	...	...	...	16	16
Offensive accumulations	...	...	...	1	1
Water in cellars	...	...	...	2	2
Houses unfit for habitation	...	...	...	4	8
Dairies and cowsheds not kept in accordance with regulations	...	...	...	13	13
Bakehouses	...	...	...	1	1
Workshops	...	...	...	6	6
Slaughter-houses...	...	...	...	1	1
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	3	5
				269	714

TABLE III.

SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS CARRIED OUT IN DISTRICT
IN PURSUANCE OF INSPECTIONS MADE AND
NOTICES SERVED.*Interior of Houses—*

Filthy houses cleansed and whitewashed	...	...	36
Houses in which repairs to plastering, brickwork or woodwork have been carried out	...	...	33
Flooded cellar drained	...	...	1

Exterior of Houses—

Defective roofs made watertight	...	...	3
Houses without eaves, spouting, or with choked or defective spouting—new spouting provided, or existing spouting cleansed and repaired	...	...	20
Damp external walls. Brickwork repaired or covered with impervious coating	...	...	2
Dangerous chimneys repaired	...	...	4
New earthenware sinks provided in lieu of old brick sinks	...	...	5

Yards and Outbuildings—

Surface paving in yards provided, renewed, or re- paired	...	...	7
Dangerous wells or cisterns filled in or suitable covers provided	...	...	1
Filthy and dilapidated outbuildings cleansed and re- paired	...	...	17

Drainage—

Absence of or insufficient drainage. Premises drained and connected to sewer	...	...	12
Surface channels abolished and stoneware pipe drains provided	...	...	60
Defective drainage relaid or repaired	...	...	8
Number of manhole inspection chambers provided to drainage systems	...	...	191

Foul untrapped drains. Stoneware gully traps fixed...	20
Additional gullies fixed	171
Choked drains opened and cleansed	35

Privies, Water-closets, and Ashpits—

Privies abolished	241
Middens abolished	121
Water-closets with flush cisterns substituted for privies	188
Water closets re-built	27
Additional water-closets provided	5
Dilapidated privies and ashpits repaired, covered over and ventilated... ..	8
Percolations of fæcal matter from privies, privies, &c., cemented	4
Galvanized dust bins provided in lieu of ashpits ...	137
Additional dust bins provided	7
Middens abolished and converted into dry ash- pits	20
Choked water-closets opened and cleansed ...	12
Defective W.C. connections made good	2
Insufficient supply of water to W.C.'s. Flush improved... ..	6
Absence of sufficient urinal accommodation. Urinals provided	2

Keeping of Animals and Offensive Accumulations—

Nuisances from the keeping of swine abated ...	9
Offensive accumulations removed from premises ...	3

Overcrowding—

Houses overcrowded—numbers reduced	8
---	---

Miscellaneous—

Filthy approaches to privies cleansed by occupiers ...	3
--	---

Housing of the Working Classes Act—

Houses unfit for human habitation closed or repaired	1
--	---

Dairies and Cowsheds—

Cowsheds provided with sufficient means of lighting	12
„ „ „ „ „ ventilation	13
Cowsheds provided with sufficient means of drainage or drains repaired	4
Dairy accommodation provided or improved	7

Factories and Workshops—

Workshops or Workrooms cleansed	6
Workshops or Workrooms additional ventilation provided to	2
Water closets substituted for privies at factories or workshops	6
Earth closets substituted for privies at factories or workshops	1
Total	1491

TABLE IV.
RESULT OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS.

Situation of Premises,	Nature of Complaint.	Act under which proceedings instituted.	Result.
Market Place	Exposing unsound and unwholesome fruit for sale (oranges).	Public Health Act, 1875 Sec. 118.	Defendant fined £1 and costs.

